

Draft #1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAN BERNARDINO STORMWATER EDUCATION PROGRAM

FACT SHEET

Protecting our valuable environmental resources is an important issue in Southern California. One of the top concerns in our area is Stormwater pollution. San Bernardino County is committed to protecting our lakes, rivers and oceans. To this end, some 16 cities in San Bernardino County have united to sponsor the San Bernardino Stormwater Education Program. The goal of this important campaign is to increase awareness among County residents about the issue, and encourage behavioral changes that will reduce the amount of pollutants flowing through the storm drain system into Los Angeles County waterways.

The following provides some important facts relating to Stormwater safety and education. One undeniable fact is: No matter where you live in Southern California, the beach starts literally at your front door."

GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Q: What is stormwater?

A: Stormwater is rainwater that enters the storm drain system and empties into lakes, rivers, streams or the ocean.

Q: Is stormwater pollution a major problem?

A: Yes. Approximately 100 million gallons of contaminated water and debris drain through the storm drain system each dry day. On rainy days, the daily flow can increase to 10 billion gallons.

Q: What's the biggest misconception about the stormwater system?

A: A major misconception among residents is that the stormwater system is the same as the sewage system.

-more-

A: (cont'd): Most individuals confuse the two systems, but they are two completely separate systems. The sewer or waste water system travels to treatment plants, and is put through an extensive and thorough filtration process before being released into the ocean.

The stormwater system, however, was created to quickly route rainwater off the streets during a heavy storm. It does not receive any filtration, and everything that is in the street goes directly into the storm drains, and ultimately becomes urban run-off and ends up in our local waterways and beaches.

Q: What is urban run-off?

A: Urban run-off is the stormwater pollution from the rain, irrigation, garden hoses or other activities that picks up pollutants (cigarette butts, trash, automotive fluids, used oil, paint, fertilizers and pesticides, lawn and garden clippings and pet waste) from streets, parking lots, driveways and yards and carries them through the storm drain system and straight to our waterways, lakes and the ocean.

Q: What types of pollutants are found in the storm drain system?

A: The list is long, and it includes: litter, fast food wrappers, motor oil, cigarette butts, paint, fertilizers, pesticides, Styrofoam cups, paper, golf balls, dirty diapers, animal feces and other trash.

THE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Stormwater pollution is an issue that effects everyone. And, it is up to both individual and businesses to take responsibility and change their habits to help clean up the local waters. The most effective method for creating change is through education.

Q: What is the San Bernardino County Stormwater Education program?

A: San Bernardino County's Stormwater Public Education Program is a multi-faceted campaign incorporating community outreach, corporate partnership programs and targeted advertising in print and broadcast media. The educational program focuses on the key stormwater issues and pollutants,

Q: Which local cities and municipalities participate in the program?

A: The cities that are participating in San Bernardino County's Stormwater Education program are: **Big Bear Lake, Chino, Chino Hills, Colton, Fontana, Grand Terrace, Highland, Loma Linda, Montclair, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, Rialto, San Bernardino, Upland and Yucaipa.**

Q: Has this program been effective?

A: The educational program has been well received. It not only supported by residents, but major corporations such as LOWE'S, HOME DEPOT and PETCO are active participants and sponsors.

Q: What are the results?

A: Recently, the San Bernardino County Stormwater Program released findings from its strategic stormwater research study, "The 2002 San Bernardino County Stormwater Program Study". Some key findings included:

- Residents are concerned about Water and Storm Drain Pollution. In fact, 58 percent of those surveyed stated that pollution of local beaches is a serious problem. And, 44 percent said that pollution of local storm drains is a serious problem.
- Nearly one in four say pollution of local waterways is worsening. Twenty-two percent said that the water in local rivers and lakes in the area is more polluted than it was a few years ago.
- Residents want to learn more. According to the survey, more than 1 in 4 people are very interested in learning how to reduce pollution.
- Sixty-two percent said they would definitely change their behavior if they learned they were polluting waterways.

-more-

WHAT CAN BE DONE

Q: How can residents report violations/violators?

A: To report illegal dumping, call 1-800-CLEANUP.

Q: Where can residents find valuable information and tips on how to protect our local waters?

A: Residents can visit area hardware, home and pet stores that are participating in the program to obtain free material and tips for protecting the stormwater system. In addition, billboards, ads and informative radio spots provide prevention tips and information about this issue. Resident can also access this information online by visiting: www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/flood/npdes.

#